



Los Angeles County
Mental Health Wellness Magazine

Minds & Matters

SPRING 2012

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DEDICATION CEREMONY FOR MONTECITO TERRACES

On Monday, February 27, 2012, AMCAL Multi-Housing and Las Palmas Foundation hosted a dedication ceremony for Montecito Terraces in Panorama City. Montecito Terraces is an apartment complex for seniors, and is one of the housing program projects funded in part by the voter-passed Mental Health Services Act (MHSA).

"We make the best decision when we let our hearts guide us," said Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) Director, Marvin Southard, D.S.W. "Our LACDMH team uses their heads wisely and lets their hearts give. This facility represents the best that can happen when leadership happens, and lets their heads and hearts guide them. People can live with dignity and have lives."

Already at capacity, Montecito Terraces consists of 98 units. Ten of the 98 units are MHSA-funded and are geared toward helping seniors who are in need of mental health services and programs. This complex is one of the only projects with a swimming pool for seniors who are interested in low-impact and aquatics exercise. Residents started moving in and occupying all the units since late 2011.

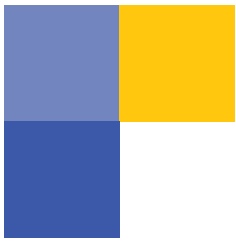
"There's change involved (here). This is a big deal when we all can change people's lives," stated Los Angeles County Supervisor, Zev Yaroslavsky. "There are 98 units in this building. Congratulations to all! When you change one life, you change the world. There are 98 lives changed here. You do the math!"

Montecito Terraces was funded through the help of the following partners: Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of Los Angeles, US Bank, Hudson Housing Capital, Los Angeles Housing Department (ARRA Funds, LADWP Funds & Affordable Housing Trust Funds), California Department of Housing and Community Development (Infill Infrastructure Grant Program), Los Angeles County MHSA Funds, Federal Home Loan Bank of San Francisco AHP and the California Tax Credit Allocation Committee.

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Minds & Matters

From Marvin J. Southard, D.S.W., Director
Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health



Spring Cleaning

During the first week or so in March, I left the glorious spring weather in Los Angeles for a cold and blustery couple of days in Washington, D.C. I was in Washington to make a presentation to a national group of local mental health directors about the work we are doing in Los Angeles County to integrate mental health with primary health care services in preparation for the full implementation of Health Reform in 2014. During the course of my talk, I was asked numerous questions by directors from New York, Utah, Texas, Virginia and other states. Those questions included what we are doing in Los Angeles for returning veterans and how we are handling the mental health needs of inmates and children in child welfare.

Everyone is always amazed by the size and scope of the services that we provide in Los Angeles, but, this time, they were also extremely complementary about how far advanced we seem in all of these different areas. I was told several times that the work we are doing all of these areas could serve as a national model for how mental health services ought to be operating. So, congratulations! Your hard work is paying off. The models that are coming into being, as a result of your blood, sweat and tears, are really making the chances for hope, wellness and recovery more realistic.

Now, for the spring cleaning: We have added many new programs and activities to our system, but we have not necessarily eliminated old policies, procedures and paper work that may be impeding our ability to get work done in our new environment. If you have ideas about anything that you think might be included in a spring cleaning inventory, please tell your supervisor or contact me directly, and we will see what we can spruce up and simplify.

Marvin J. Southard, D.S.W.

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Employee Recognition

Retired

January 2012

Montreal Rodney,
39 yrs
Imelda Allen, 25 yrs

February 2012

Otheria Oei-Lieman,
14 yrs
Michael Sahacht, 15 yrs
Jaime Ner, 27 yrs

March 2012

Lydia Bangtson, 10 yrs
Sylvia Braswell, 32 yrs
Jacqueline Callis, 17 yrs
Maria Cleveland, 10 yrs
Sharon De Frank, 32 yrs
Marlinda Glassman,
41 yrs
Keren Goldberg, 13 yrs
Gregory Hooker, 24 yrs
Bing Lau, 36 yrs
Gladys Lee, 5 yrs
Cynthia Luellen, 17 yrs
Vivian Matsushige,
22 yrs
Kathleen McQuade,
17 yrs
Evelyn Mitchell, 43 yrs
Jaime Nahman, 9 yrs
Carole Saslow, 12 yrs
Catherine Schofield,
21 yrs
Ronald Schraiber,
14 yrs
Henry Sevcik, 20 yrs
Mary Silvestrini, 6 yrs
Deborah Smith, 35 yrs
John Snibbe, 13 yrs
Jerry Stupar, 20 yrs
Michael Tyoran, 11 yrs
Vivian Watts, 27 yrs
William West, 15 yrs



NEW LACDMH DISTRICT CHIEF FOR SERVICE AREA 2

Lisa Wong, M.A., has been selected as the new LACDMH District Chief for Service Area 2, replacing Dr. Ron Klein. Wong began her new role as District Chief on December 19, 2011. She has been employed by Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health for more than 20 years. For the past four years, she has held the title of Mental Health Clinical Program Head, assigned to Downtown Mental Health Center. In this capacity, she has developed the CalWORKs Families Project, Wellness Center, Prevention and Early Intervention, and Healthy Way L.A. programs.

In addition, she developed many successful collaborative projects with community agencies and other county departments to address the mental health and social service needs of the homeless in the skid row area. Wong has administrative experience in planning, developing policies, working with stakeholders, revenue generation, establishing Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) and contractual agreements.



NEW LACDMH DISTRICT CHIEF, ADULT SYSTEM OF CARE

Wendi Tovey, L.C.S.W., has been named the newest Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) District Chief for Adult System of Care (ASOC). She will serve as the administrative age group lead for operations within the bureau, and will work closely with the adult programs across the Department's network of directly operated programs and legal entity providers.

Tovey has been with LACDMH since 1993. She has worked on the Psychiatric Mobile Response Team at Harbor-UCLA, and has served as a "pioneer" in LACDMH's efforts to address the needs of consumers in various programs such as Adult Targeted Case Management Services, Assertive Community Treatment and Full Service Partnership.

Tovey is considered an "early adaptor" in developing and transforming LACDMH's service delivery system to a recovery-driven model. Her peers and management recognize her as an invaluable resource because of her knowledge, skill and values in moving the LACDMH system forward.

In Their Own Words



LACDMH CELEBRATES PALO VERDE GRAND OPENING **BY KATHLEEN PICHÉ, PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE DIRECTOR**

The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) gathered with the community on Friday, January 20, 2012, to celebrate the grand opening of Palo Verde, a 60-unit permanent supportive housing development for formerly homeless and low income single adults in Sun Valley where supportive services are available on-site to all residents.

“Palo Verde represents a new model of housing to meet the needs of the most vulnerable people in our community transitioning out of homelessness. This development would not have been possible without the collective collaboration and political will of the public and private sectors who came together with the necessary resources,” said Stephanie Klasky-Gamer, President and CEO of L.A. Family Housing. “This is the first of many buildings to end homelessness in our community.”

Stephanie welcomed approximately 70 dignitaries, collaborators, residents and guests from the community. She then introduced the impassioned speakers, including: Tony Cárdenas, Councilmember, City of Los Angeles, 6th District, Zev Yaroslavsky, L.A. County Board Supervisor, 3rd District and Wayne Brander, L.A. Family Housing Board Chair. Stephanie then acknowledged all contributors, giving special thanks to Marvin Southard, LACDMH Director, and Robin Kay, LACDMH Chief Deputy Director.

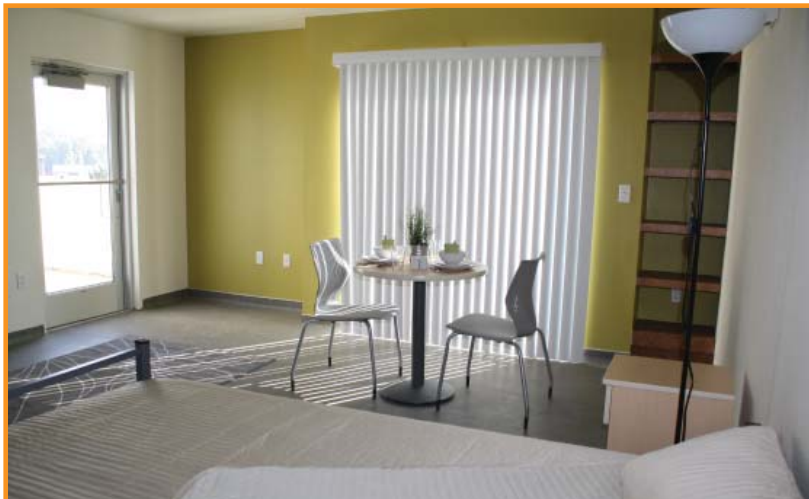
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LA City Councilman Antonio Cárdenas presents Stephanie Klasky-Gramer with an award.



LA County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky speaks to audience.



Interior view of vacant room.



Stephanie Klasky-Gramer's opening speech.

LACDMH contributed \$9.75 million of Mental Health Service Act (MHSA) funding to the project, allowing L.A. Family Housing to successfully leverage a total of \$17 million in public and private capital for Palo Verde.

Residents have already moved into the 450 square-foot single units, each features a private bath. The building boasts a Gold LEED Certification, meaning it went above and beyond the required design and environmentally sustainable standards and took the extra step of educating clients and staff about environmentally sound practices.

One resident, Howard Brown, had been living behind a CVS Pharmacy for over a year in Northridge. A local gym allowed him to shower daily. "Nobody believed that I was homeless," he said. Howard is featured in many of the photos that adorn the Palo Verde lobby and conference room walls. Howard is on the road to hope, wellness and recovery in his new home, the first step to self-sufficiency.



Palo Verde is the former home of the historic Sun Valley Car Wash.

LACDMH & NETSMART CELEBRATE IBHIS

On Tuesday, January 10, a kick-off celebration was held for the long-awaited Integrated Behavioral Health Information System (IBHIS) that will eventually be implemented by the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) in 2014. LACDMH hosted the kick-off with Netsmart Technologies who is providing the new system.

"In 2014, we will find ourselves in a different business environment than where we are now," said LACDMH Director, Marvin Southard, D.S.W., to a room full of employees. "Our clients are better served here in L.A. than any other because of your work. So, this system will be another tool in helping you do your job."

IBHIS was acquired by LACDMH to provide a cost-saving, paperless system to improve the quality of care for clients. In October 2011, the Board of Supervisors approved a \$93 million contract with Netsmart to build a state-of-the-art electronic health record system that could be up and running before the 2015 federal deadline. IBHIS will upgrade, integrate and streamline health care services, and support LACDMH in its role as a provider of mental health services and as the local plan administrator for California's Medicaid mental health program.

With IBHIS, clinicians can see client history, track Katie A. and AB109 patients, immediately get the information they need to provide the proper services to clients, and adequately bill for the services offered.

Health Care Reform requires providers to work more efficiently and coordinate care across the different domains of health care. Several years ago, LACDMH began the process of eliminating paper health records well ahead of the federal mandates set by the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act. All of these required mandates were enacted as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act which penalizes organizations that are not using an electronic health record system by 2015 for Medicare providers.

Implementing IBHIS, LACDMH is committed to work with Netsmart for approximately 11 years.

"What we do here is going to be noticed around the country – and around the world," stated Netsmart CEO, Mike Valentine.

LACDMH GOES TO THE CORE TO CREATE COMMUNITY AWARENESS IN SERVICE AREA 7 By Gregory Lecklitner, LACDMH

How can we best serve children and families beset by some of life's biggest challenges – child abuse, mental illness, substance abuse, domestic violence, poverty and alienation?

The Los Angeles County Departments of Children and Family Services and Mental Health have come together in an historic alliance to enhance practice as a vehicle to achieve better outcomes for those children and families who have come to their attention. The two departments have endorsed a shared approach to practice, referred to as the Core Practice Model, and have begun a large-scale training and coaching effort to reform the way social workers, mental health clinicians and community partners work with children and families on a case by case basis.

This new model promotes collaboration through a child and family team process that is grounded in a strong engagement with families and a focus on addressing the underlying needs of children through a strength-based approach. Coaching for child welfare social workers and mental health clinicians will be used to drive this change in practice.

The Core Practice Model is a central element of the County's response to the Katie A. class action lawsuit and is expected to strengthen both systems performance (e.g. child and family engagement, teaming, needs/strengths-based assessment) and outcomes for children and families (e.g. well-being, school performance, health). These changes will be measured and promoted via an intensive case review and quality improvement process known as the Quality Services Review (QSR), which has already begun and will continue until several key benchmarks are achieved.

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LACDMH Mission

Enriching lives through partnerships designed to strengthen the community's capacity to support recovery and resiliency.

Our Values

Integrity: We conduct ourselves professionally according to the highest ethical standards.

Respect: We recognize the uniqueness of every individual and treat all people in a way that affirms their personal worth and dignity.

Accountability: We take responsibility for our choices and their outcomes.

Collaboration: We work together toward common goals by partnering with the whole community, sharing knowledge, building strong consensus, and sharing decision-making.

Dedication: We will do whatever it takes to improve the lives of our clients and communities.

Transparency: We openly convey our ideas, decisions and outcomes to ensure trust in our organization.

Quality and Excellence: We identify the highest personal, organizational, professional and clinical standards and commit ourselves to achieving those standards by continually improving every aspect of our performance.



Los Angeles County
Department of Mental Health
is dedicated to partnering with
clients, families and communities
to create hope, wellness and
recovery.



<http://dmh.lacounty.gov>

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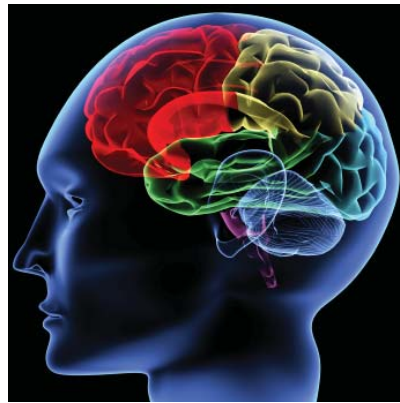
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A Final Thought



THE IMPORTANCE OF BRAIN HEALTH AND EXERCISE By Kathleen Piché, L.C.S.W., Public Information Office Director

The term “use it or lose it” can apply to many things, but here I’d like to relate it to brain health. Yes, brain health. We need to exercise our brains to keep them alert and functioning optimally, just like keeping physically fit, which allows us to feel great and strengthen muscles to help support our bodies. There are both short and long-term benefits to brain fitness. Short-term benefits include: better concentration, improved memory and extended mental clarity when faced with stressful conditions. Long-term benefits include the creation of a “brain reserve” that may protect us from diseases such as Alzheimer’s.

According to brain fitness and cognitive health website Sharpbrains.com, an independent market research and innovative think-tank that tracks brain fitness and applied neuroplasticity research, the four cornerstones of brain health are: nutrition, physical exercise, stress management and mental stimulation. If you are already exercising your mind and thinking that constant active learning provides great mental stimulation, you are on the right track!

Physical exercise is important because it influences the rate of new neuron creation in our brains. Mental exercise is important because it helps determine how those new neurons are used and how long they survive. Stress can reduce both the creation of new neurons and their lifetime, so stress management is important.

The first time we do activities such as crossword puzzles, Sudoku or knitting, it is beneficial because it forces our brains to learn. But when doing these becomes completely routine, the marginal benefit is limited. Neuropsychologists no longer recommend paper-based activities, but are now suggesting computer-based brain exercise software programs because they provide a variety of new activities, constantly altering and increasing the level of challenge.

But you don’t need a computer to train your brain! Below are some quick and easy exercises that can reduce stress and improve short-term memory on a daily basis:

- Short, five-minute meditations, combining deep, regular breathing while visualizing beautiful landscapes or remembering times in the past when you have been successful at a tough task.
- Exercise your brain with number games that involve subtraction or multiplication. You don’t need to be a math genius. The goal is to train and improve short-term memory. If you prefer another method, try to remember friends’ phone numbers.
- It’s important to vary routines. Take a different route to work. Talk to a different colleague. Ask an unexpected question. Approach every day as a living experiment, a learning opportunity.

The goal is to take on new challenges that are not difficult or impossible and learn how to manage stress to prevent anxiety from kicking in.

Other habits of highly effective brains you may want to adapt include: practicing positive thinking, giving yourself new challenges and goals (especially educational), making your own decisions (and learning from them), developing stimulating friendships, traveling and laughing often.